

VZCZCXRO1298
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #1407 2141258
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 011258Z AUG 08
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2365
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001407

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/01/2018
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: NEW HAMAS ARRESTS TARGET GAZA'S SENIOR FATAH
LEADERS

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1387
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 1361

Classified By: Consul General Jake Waller, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Hamas arrested 17 of the Gaza Strip's senior Fatah leaders early August 1, including Gaza Governor Muhammad al-Qidwa and Fatah Central Committee (FCC) member Zakariya al-Agha. Senior Hamas spokesman Abu Zuhri called a arrests a response to "continued political detention of Hamas leaders in the West Bank." The only senior Fatah leader not targeted was Ahmad Hillis, whose relations with Hamas remain unsettled. End summary.

Most of Gaza's Senior Fatah Leaders Jailed

[1](#)2. (SBU) Office directors of senior Fatah leaders and press report that 17 of Gaza's senior Fatah leaders were arrested and jailed by Hamas security forces early August 1. Arrestees include FCC/PLO Executive Committee member Zakariya al-Agha, Gaza Governor Muhammad al-Qidwa, Khan Yunis Governor Usama Muhammad al-Farra, Central Gaza Governor Abdullah Abu Samhadana, senior Fatah Revolutionary Council member Ibrahim Abu al-Naja and top Fatah secretaries across the Gaza Strip. All remain in Hamas detention as of 1500 local. Hamas did not arrest senior Fatah leader Ahmad Hillis.

Hamas: Arrest Retaliation for PA
Detention of West Bank Hamas Figures

[1](#)3. (U) Senior Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri told Arabic-language television August 1 that the arrests are "a response to the continued political detention of Hamas leaders, figures and members in the West Bank. More than 200 Hamas cadres have been arrested since the start of the week. These arrests were met with silence, both locally and abroad, leaving us no other option to stop the massacre targeting Hamas in the West Bank." Abu Zuhri also dismissed reports that PA President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) order Hamas detainees released as "completely unfounded."

Comment on Ahmad Hillis and
His Accommodation with Hamas

[1](#)4. (C) Senior Fatah contacts have told us that Ahmad Hillis, the only senior Fatah leader in Gaza not arrested on August 1, has maintained an accommodation with Hamas to protect him and his followers since Hamas' violent takeover of Gaza in June 2007. Hillis, former head of Gaza's Fatah Higher Committee and a rival of al-Agha and Muhammad Dahlan, was also a friend and prison mate of Izz al-Din al-Qassam commander Ahmad Ja'abari in the 1980s, before al-Ja'abari joined Hamas. Fatah contacts report that the Hillis-Hamas accommodation may now be growing more tenuous. As reported

in Ref A, some in Hamas suspect Hillis clan members of sheltering suspects in the July 25 bombing attack, and some of Hillis' allies and subordinates have been arrested in Hamas' crackdown. Relations between Hamas and Hillis remain unsettled. With most Fatah leaders associated with President Abbas exiled, jailed or cowed, Hamas may feel it no longer needs Hillis and his supporters in their role as a counterweight to the pro-Abbas Fatah elements in Gaza.

WALLES